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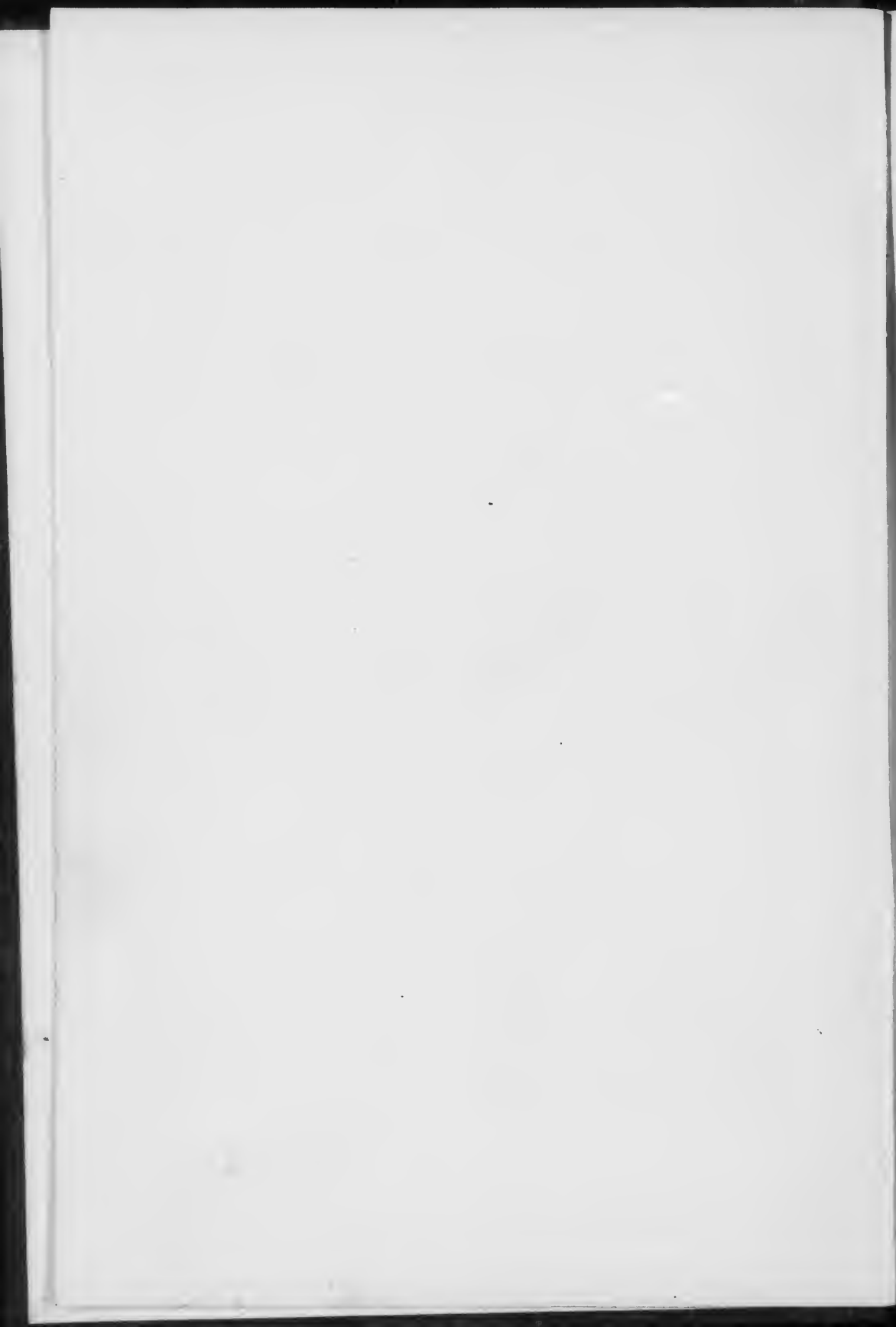


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TOM O' JACK'S LAD.

BY
UNCLE JACOB.

TWENTY-NINTH THOUSAND.

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Introduction.

THE Reverend John Wesley visited Lancashire soon after he was shut out of the Church of England ; and a few years subsequent to the formation of the Methodist Society at Manchester, he was walking to a coach office, within twenty miles of Bolton, about six o'clock in the evening of the fifth day of November—a hundred years ago.

The lower class of people were then violently rude, and a stranger of respectability was always a mark for a jest, and sometimes for an assault. When injuries were done, the rude assailant thought he made ample compensation by offering to fight his victim, though the recompense was usually an additional affliction. Indeed, the people were almost without books, without schools, without any civilizing associations, and with

only such demoralizing games as dog-fighting, cock-fighting, and badger-drawing, for their recreations. In those days there were churches, and good sermons, and working Christians; but the masses of the people, both rich and poor, were in ignorance, and without enlightened teachers. It is said that the darkest hour of night is the hour which precedes the hour of sunrise. The time of which I am speaking was the last hour of the night of England. Her Fletchers in the churches, her Whitfields in the chapels, and her Wesleys on the way side and market places, dared to be earnest preachers, shaking the customs of the day, and rousing the attention of all England to the truths they spoke. Then the day of our country's moral mightiness began to dawn.

The language of the place where Mr. Wesley was on this said fifth day of November was as strange as its people. There was scarcely a Master in the place, but respectable men were honoured by having their Christian and surnames spoken distinctly and without abbreviations. No such honour was paid to any of the poorer classes, except in derision. They rarely or never heard their surname, and were stinted in their Christian names. The difficulties of this system of naming were

usually got over by such clever contrivances as the following. A man called Jack lived in a valley, near a coal-pit : he married, and had a son who was named Thomas—by the parson. The father said at the Christening “Tom,” but the parson said “Thomas.” There were many Toms in the neighbourhood, and, therefore, to distinguish this Tom from other Toms, he was called “Tom o’ Jack’s lad.” Sometimes he was in mischief at a distance from home, then his distinction was “Tom o’ Jack’s lad o’ pit’s hoile.”

Now this Tom is the hero of my tales, and I must describe him. He had never been to any school : as soon as he could walk, he was turned into the public lanes — the common recreation-ground of the day. Tom never wore shoes till he was a Methodist. When he was only eight years of age, his father bought him a pair of clogs, but he was not to keep them unless he fought a battle to his father’s satisfaction. Tom was put into clogs on Sundays, and his little hands placed on his opponent’s shoulders ; then the father and the cruel men who stood by called out “punch lads.” Tom punched, and his opponent punched, and because Tom was the victor, he was allowed to retain the clogs, which he did to the terror of the lads of his district. I know

not at what age Tom went to work, but he must have gone very early, for when he was only fourteen years of age, he had a bull-dog and other expensive fighting companions.

This is the hero of my tale. On this said fifth day of November, he is eighteen years of age, utterly ignorant of useful knowledge, but accomplished in the rough, thoughtless, dashing boldness of the Lancashire pit-men, one hundred years ago. I introduce him and his marvellous history to my readers, because he became an eminent Wesleyan, and founded a circuit (one of the richest and noblest circuits in connection with the Wesleyan Conference), and is the ancestor of one of the wealthiest and mightiest families of Great Britain; and because the means which he employed to make the descendants of an ordinary labouring man eminent Christian gentlemen, distinguished bankers, patriotic legislators, and noblemen of their country, are available to every Briton, for adoption, for labour, for family happiness, and for family honours.

My tales will read like a romance, but I have worked together only facts for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and in honour of the mighty dead.

UNCLE JACOB.

Tom o' Jack's lad.

CHAPTER I.

"How far a little candle throws its beams!
So shines a good deed in this naughty world."

"WHAT'S that parson-chap doing here?" said Tom o' Jack's lad to his bull-dog and his other companions, when he saw the Rev. John Wesley, one hundred years ago, passing along a lane leading to a coach-office. "I'll have a ride on his back; keep back dog, lads."

Saying this, Tom ran and overtook Mr. Wesley, and jumped on his back. "Yo's like to carry me a bit, Mister," said Tom.

Poor Mr. Wesley was too weak to obey, for Tom was a heavy fellow, and through the tight grasp of the rude, strong man round Mr. Wesley's throat, he soon fell fainting to the ground.

Now Tom was not without his good qualities, but there had been nothing in his district to incite them to

life and action. True, he had fought battles as oft in defending others as in his mad games, but that was his system, and he loved fighting, the national game of the day. He saw Mr. Wesley fall, and at once felt pity.

"Run, Tom," said a man.

"Nay, I'll no run. I'll fight him when he comes round, or onny o' his chaps."

Fortunately, a kind-hearted woman was passing, and she got water. Mr. Wesley drank, and rallied so as to stand, and looking about him, his eyes rested on Tom.

"I did it," fearlessly said Tom.

"What is your name?"

"Tom o' Jack's lad," said several voices.

"Tom, you must be my friend now."

"Stand back, lads," shouted Tom, "I'll punch the ceen out o' onny o' you that touches the chap. Now, mister, jump on my back, and I'll hug thee to Sally's house."

Mr. Wesley took hold of his arm, declining the hug, and when Tom found himself walking arm-in-arm with his new friend, he laughed, and he stamped his clogs, and when he could no longer bear the queer position, he said, "Man, doint do that, for it do look so fool-like."

They soon arrived at Sally's house, and Tom was asked in. Mr. Wesley and Tom then went in; he would not accept of a chair, but seated himself on the table and stared at the stranger, wondering what sort of man he was to offer friendship in reply for rudeness. At last he cried out, "Who ist thee?"

"I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Is that a chap in Lunnun?"

"Do you not know Jesus Christ?"

"No."

"Why, the clergyman names him every Sunday many times."

"I ne'er go to church."

"You have a soul—"

"No, I aint; but I ha' got a bull-dog," said Tom, before Mr. Wesley could finish his speech.

"Can you read?"

"No, and don't want to."

"I think I can induce you to learn to read. I will get a friend to teach you, and afterwards I can help you in many ways. You owe me a kindness for the assault of this evening, and I ask you to oblige me by learning to read."

"It maunt cost nout."

"No, and you shall have books given to you."

"Then I'll try to larn just to please you."

Mr. Wesley took Tom's address, and told him who he was. After saying something about Jesus, he knelt down, and kind Sally knelt down, and Tom also knelt down. Mr. Wesley then prayed, and in his prayer talked as though his master was there. Tom looked all round the room, then shut his eyes, and presently tears came and rolled down his cheeks, but Tom knew not why he cried.

That very night, before Mr. Wesley slept, he wrote the following letter to a lady residing near the town.

"My dear sister in Christ,

"You are watching for an opening for Methodism in this neighbourhood, and I have found one. I have met a man of the roughest and most ignorant class. He has promised me to learn to read. Will you teach him? I know not how you will manage him, for he is totally ignorant of useful and religious knowledge, but if tamed, educated, and converted, he will be the man this district requires. His name is Thomas Harrison—the pitmen call him Tom o' Jack's lad. Into your hands I commend him, with prayer to our Father in heaven, that He may bless

both you and him, and vouchsafe you in Christ eternal salvation.

“Your affectionate brother,

“John Wesley.”

This lady visited Tom at the pit where he worked, and told him she was Mr. Wesley's sister in Christ, and that they wanted him to be a brother. It was a riddle to Tom, and he was speechless. Then she gave him the first lesson, sitting on a large lump of coal over which Tom had spread a little hay.

“Now Tom,” said the lady, “all over the world there are men and women, and they learn something new every day. They send messages to one another, describing what they have learnt from printed books. Tom, you must learn to read these books. It is very easy.”

“What a lot of stuff: I can ne'er mind all that.”

“Can you remember twenty-six names?”

“Yees, we've got fifty chaps here, and I knows 'em all.”

“Well, in this book there are but twenty-six letters.”

“Only twenty-six!”

* * * * *

Tom learnt his letters, and he learnt to spell Tom; then he spelt Jack, and one by one worked through the

names of his comrades ; and with every lesson he received. his lady-friend gave him incidentally scraps of useful knowledge. Tom's bull-dog even began to like the school-hour, and would go for a caress to the lady's hand, the touch of beauty on the hard, scarred head of the dog seeming to make it look amiable : Tom was pleased too, for kindness to his dog was an addition kindness to himself.

The lady sickened and died.

Day by day she went her journey to instruct Tom in his dinner-hour, and day by day she had sat with him and several of his comrades, talking and reading, regardless of rains and winds ; and the consequences were conghs, colds, sickness, and death.

I pass over Tom's interview with her in the sick chamber, when he promised to talk to Jesus every day upon his knees : and to go to Mr. Wesley for instructions when he next came into the neighbourhood. Tom toiled with his pit-mates over their books for three weeks without a teacher, and then the lady died.

She was buried on a Saturday. Tom and several of the pitmen were there ; and those lions, when fighting in clogs, stood like children round the grave.

The clergyman and others were amazed at the scene ;

and when the solemn service was over, he asked Tom who the lady was, and what she was to the pitmen.

Tom drew his hands across his eyes to wipe away a tear, and then he said, "That woman, mister, was my sister in Christ. You know me, I'm Tom o' Jack's lad. I knew nout but fightin' and swearin' afore she tell'd me about Jesus Christ. Now I know summit, but I can't tell ye what it is greadly. That dog no fights now, them clogs ha' never punch'd nobody, and it's all through that dead woman there, aint it lads?"

"Aye," solemnly said his friends.

"How came you to be introduced to the lady," said the clergyman.

"By Mr. Wesley."

"Mr. Wesley?"

"Aye," said Tom's father, "Tom got on the gentleman's back and hurt him. The gentleman axed Tom to be his friend; and then the gentleman got the lady to teach Tom; and she's dead all through us. I mind her coming one rainy day, and it was all through that she died. We got some sacks on some posts, and housed her as well as we could, but she got very wei, and was delicate-like, and couldn't stand it, and she was never well afterwards. She was a lady, sir!"

Then the old man ceased to check his feelings, and he let his tears fall freely. The clergyman looked amazed, and as he left the grave, said even to the pitmen, "Good bye, friends."

"Good bye, sir," said all.

Mr. Wesley was informed of the death of his friend, and he himself preached in the neighbourhood of the grave a funeral sermon. After the sermon, Tom and Mr. Wesley were together for some hours.

The next morning Tom met his associates at the pit, and told them he had a message for them from the lady's brother—Mr. Wesley. They went to a place where she used to teach them, and Tom sat on a big lump of coal, and then, with his father and friends about him, Tom said, "I's a Methodist, chaps, I is, and that's my ticket."

He handed it to the group about him, and they read—

"Thomas Harrison having expressed to me his consciousness of sin, and his desire to save his soul, is admitted (on trial) this day a member of my Societies, comprising only persons who are anxious to live religious lives. JOHN WESLEY.

"Now, lads, on Sunday next, I's going to a class-meeting at Manchester. Will onny o' ye gang wi'

me? Mr. Wesley said I was to ax ye all. It's a good step to walk, but we can tak' some grub in pockets."

"What's a class-meeting like, Tom?" said several of those standing by.

"That's jist what I ax'd Mr. Wesley. It's about a dozen or twenty folk who meet together once a week to talk about religion, and to speak of themselves. There is one of the lot who has got a deal of sense, and he teaches the others. Mr. Wesley says that we may ax that chap any question we like to, and that he must answer, for he's there on purpose."

Tom and six others went to the class-meeting.

I pass their initiation into Methodism, and their conversation the next morning when they met at the pit, and told their friends there that they were going again next Sunday.

When Tom was away, his brother members told the the pitmen that the leader called upon "Brother Harrison" to pray, and that Tom called out—

"I can no pray. I know nowhere where Jesus is; but if you be here, Jesus, and will make me happy, I shall be obliged to you. I's felt queer since I first heard of thee. I want to be like my sister that's dead. I want to be more like Mr. Wesley. I want to keep

from swearing and fighting. So I can say no more Jesus, and I hope you've heard me."

Week by week Tom went to his class, and his comrades so increased in number every week, that they became too many for one class, and were consequently divided, and put in many classes.

It must not be supposed that all this time Tom encountered no opposition in following his new course of life. Strange rumours were abroad in the district; some of the pitmen hinting that Tom was mad. This was not said in the hearing of Tom, for although he had "turned Methodist," the lamb, if roused, would soon become the lion, and there was a fear of what he might then do.

CHAPTER II.

“He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside.”

A CLASS Meeting is a company of about twelve religious people who meet together weekly for conversation on individual piety. One of the company is the Leader. Before his appointment to the office, he was a member living a blameless life. The whole company have individually declared that a desire for Christian fellowship, and a sphere of usefulness in the Wesleyan Society, is their only motive in attending the meeting. The Leader has three duties. He cultivates personal piety as much as physical strength: he strives by example and counsel, to move every member into a higher state of intellectual happiness; making all working Christians; and he watches the talents of his charge, sending forth all to labour according to their abilities, some as prayer leaders, and others as tract

distributors, Sunday-school teachers, local preachers, and candidates for the ministry.

His opportunities of acquiring information as to character and abilities, and his power to assist (though he himself may be a poor man), gives to the Wesleyan body particularly, and to the world generally, men of genius and merit, who, when young, though poor and friendless, are singled out from their companions by the educated eye and ear of a good leader, and put where they can exercise their talents so as to rise or fall according to their future character and exertions.

The service of a class-meeting is very simple. The leader briefly narrates his religious experience as a man who has vowed to live a Christian life; and he calls on each member to live after the same manner—for all have taken the vow. NO CONFESSION OF PARTICULAR SINS IS MADE; only a simple avowal of honest piety. Sometimes, a member's mind has been disturbed, and then the doubt is named and generally removed.

Now we return to Tom. He did his class-leader good. He was a regular attendant every sabbath. Through rain and snow, and regardless of cold, fatigue, and dark nights, Tom went to chapel, to the Sunday-school, and to the class-meeting: he was always in time for

the first service, and he remained to hear the "amen" of the last prayer.

On one Sunday, Tom was in great trouble. When his leader spoke to him, he replied, "I don't feel right. I don't believe there is a God, nor ought that cares for the poor."

"Brother Harrison!" said the leader.

"Aye, ye may brother me, but ye's to hear like what I's got to say: Mr. Wesley says so. Now, hearken ye. Ye told me that the cattle on a thousand hills belong to God; that God sees every thing; that God knows every thing; and now I have ye fast, Mister. There's a woman yonder: ye may see her, if ye'll get on that stool, and look out of the window. Get up, missis," (to a sister) "and jist let him have a look. That's the woman; and she do say that she have not tasted food since yester morning. Now, if God sees her, and knows all about it, and has got all that grub, why don't him give her some: that's what I want to know. If I had it, I couldn't find it in my heart to clam any body, and know I was doing it. There's no religion in that, I think. I feel I shall backslide."

The leader was stunned. All the members looked at earnest Tom with astonishment. It was decidedly

a critical time. All felt that the result would make Tom a Methodist for life, or send him back to fighting and swearing.

"Excuse me," said the leader, and he left the room.

In a few minutes he returned with the poor hungry woman, and he was followed by a servant bringing food. The woman ate and wept, and all were silent about her.

When she had satisfied herself with food, the leader took a seat near her, and said, "Don't weep; perhaps we can assist you to lodgings to-night, and to work to-morrow. How long have you been in such poverty as this?"

"Not long. I aint been married but six months. My chap is one of the best in the world, but he will git drunk, and he's been fuddling ever since we wed. Yester-morning bailiffs took all our bits of things for rent; and so I came to Manchester to get work, and have had naught to eat till now."

"Had your husband work to go to?"

"Yes, he's a clever hand, and they are glad to get him. He's a good fellow when he's sober. I'm jist thinking he'll fret after me when he gets right again. I wonder where he is."

The leader then explained to the poor woman, that

she was in a Wesleyan class-meeting, that they wished her to remain with them, and that she could listen to what was said.

Then the worthy man replied to Tom, "Your remarks just now I approve of. Always speak to me freely on any doubt that you have, and I will try to reply as best I can. You see that this poor sister is suffering through her husband's cruelty, and not through God's neglect. The great God has given to her husband a healthy body and skill to labour successfully in his business, but he is a drunkard."

"Then why didn't God make him so that he couldn't drink?"

"Because God wants this poor man to do right of him—"

"If God can do all things, why does he not make him?" said Tom, before the leader had concluded his reply.

"You always bring your dog with you. Now, do you like that dog to come by his own impulse to kiss your hand, or to be forced to do it?"

"I like him to do it of himself, for it shows he likes me."

"Well, I was going to say, that God wants this poor

man to do right of his own free-will. Every glass of drink he takes is his own act and deed. He knows he is doing wrong, and he can abstain from doing wrong, if he will. If God made him do right, as you make a horse do right—by force, he would be like a machine, going, coming, doing, and speaking without intelligence. That could not please God. At least, I think not.”

“God made man holy, intelligent, and free. I have told you how man sinned, and how all men require converting. Man’s state is simply this: he is in a world which produces every variety of food and clothing; subjects for him to study, and means by which he may improve his condition, if he make a right use of his knowledge. It is possible for you to starve, even amongst food. Food is got by labour, and if a man refuse to work, then he starves, his wife pines, and his children go hungry and in rags. But it is not through God’s unkindness.”

“I feel better now,” said Tom. “I won’t backslide. But, tell me please why God lets some folks be better off than others. Yo’s got a better coat than I have.”

“Some men save money. No matter how little they earn, they save a little from that little. Now, if a man

save a farthing a week, he will have a penny saved in a month, and a shilling in a year. Then he gets pounds, and dies. He leaves his children his pounds and his examples, and they save as the father did; but when they die, they leave hundreds of pounds to their children. Then the children take up the hundreds of pounds, with the example their fathers followed, and they die worth thousands of pounds. And so these farthings go on increasing and increasing from one generation to another generation. Now, suppose a man did not save anything at all, but spent more than he earned, and accumulated debts, his children would be poor, and afflicted with bad habits; and some day the descendants of the provident man and the improvident man might meet together in one place—one as a criminal, and the other as a judge; one as a beggar, and the other as a squire giving alms; one as a peasant, the other as a peer.”

“Bless you, I likes to hear it,” said Tom.

“Our time is gone. We will talk on this subject again, but now we must part. Let us pray.”

They all kneeled down, and the leader prayed; and in his prayer he named the poor woman and her husband. He got so earnest as to exclaim, “Bring him

here. Lord. He had scarcely spoken the words before Tom cried out, "I'll help the Lord," and to the amazement of the company, he rushed out of the room, crying out. "Keep woman until I come back."

To the pot-houses of Manchester Tom hastened, his dog at his heels, and wherever he went, he called out, "Is Jim here?"

"What Jim?" was the reply.

"Why, Jim that's clamming his wife."

"No," said one; but how some slunk off. as though they were guilty of the same cruelty, I cannot now wait to describe.

After a ramble of many hours, and continuous and careful searches, Tom saw a man, standing sober and alone, but in rags, at the top of a bank, with his hands in his pockets, and looking as though he were out of a world where there is plenty of food and clothing both for man and beast.

"How strange he looks," thought Tom, "I wonder if it's Jim."

"Jim," shouted Tom.

"How dost thee know me lad?"

Tom looked angry, and the dog growled.

"If thee and thy dog don't move off, I'll thrash the

life out of thee both," said Jim.

"Man, I'm a Methodist, and don't fight. I've seen the time when I could have licked thee twice in five minutes. But I want thee, for I've found thy wife."

"My wife!"

"Aye, she was clamming, and sitting on a door-step. Landlord has taken all the things, and she came to Manchester last night to get work. Will thee go and see her?"

"Noa. I's got no grub, and I can't see her clam."

"She's gòt plenty now, and I'll tak' ye both to my father's, and we'll soon get work for ye. Come, Jim."

Tom and Jim went to the poor wife, and it was late when they got there; and they found that the poor woman had gone to bed. Jim had food given him, and before he had finished eating, his wife came to his side.

Then Jim wept like a child.

"Never mind, lad," said his wife, I's heard such things since I's bin here, that I don't mind at all now. We shall both get work to-morrow, Jim, and we can soon get our things back."

The leader gave a note to Tom, and away Tom went to the place where Jim lived, walking most of the night, and saw the landlord, who promised to wait for

the rent till Jim had got work.

Jim after this became a sober man; and both he and wife worked and saved money, became good Methodists, and had Methodist sons and daughters.

Tom wanted conversion. Long he attended his class-meeting before he could understand conversion. "I's to hate what I now love. I's to be as happy in doing right as I used to be in doing wrong. I's to love my God as much as I love my dog! It cannot be. I's so used to doing wrong, I must be what I is." So Tom talked to himself, and such were his ideas when he and his dog went to meet Mr. Wesley, who was on a visit to Liverpool. It was a special meeting, at Tom's written request.

At Liverpool, the three met—Mr. Wesley, Tom and the dog.

"I's wretched, I is," said Tom, "ye's done me a deal of harm, for I's never been right since I seed ye."

"What is the matter, my good man? What do you want?"

"I wants converting. Now, I am miserable, and must be converted afore I goes home."

"But I cannot convert you."

"I knows that; and I know that God can; but how

am I to ax him, to get him to do it."

"Mr. Harrison, Jesus Christ is your Saviour."

"Yes, he is. I believe all that."

"God will pardon your sins now, if you truly repent, and endeavour by the assistance of God, to live henceforth a godly life."

"Well, I am sorry I ever sinned; and I'll never sin again, if God will help me to be good."

Then, after some further conversation, Mr. Wesley told Tom to kneel, but he himself remained standing. When the penitent was on his knees, the minister spake solemnly the following absolution :

"Almighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live, and hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins."

Then laying his hand on Tom's head, he said :

"He pardoneth and absolveth you, if you truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel."

Raising his hand from the penitent's head, he continued—

"Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true

repentance and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our live hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to His eternal joy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Tom said, "Amen."

The minister then knelt, and repeated the world's prayer—Our Father, &c.,—and Tom softly, solemnly, and slowly repeated it after him.

Then Mr. Wesley offered an extempore prayer—

"Father, You forgive my brother. He kneels before Thee confessing his sins: sorrowing on account of his sins: and asking for Thy forgiveness. You forgive him; and Thy Spirit tells his spirit he is pardoned."

"I believe it does," said Tom.

"He is willing," continued Mr. Wesley, "to serve Thee, obeying all Thy commandments, enduring poverty or riches according to Thy will; and always avoiding sin."

"If God helps me, I can and will," said Tom.

"He can do nothing well of himself. He is pardoned now, and may want converting again to-morrow; then that he asks Thee, Almighty God, to dwell with him, and keep him in all his ways, be Thou his Saviour.

When he sins and repents, again forgive; and when tempted to sin, and he asks Thee to help him, save him, and he will praise Thee evermore."

They both rose from their knees, and Tom took hold of Mr. Wesley's hand, and said, "You have done nothing to me, but I feel that God's done a good deal. I am a man now."

Some two hours' afterwards, Tom left Mr. Wesley; and, as he journeyed homewards, his face was calm, his foot was steady, and his dog was by his side. It was late in the evening, and they had twenty-five miles to walk. The stars were shining, and to Tom, they seemed never to have shined so gloriously before. He had the road almost to himself, and as he trudged along with his old companion, after a while, he wept.

What made him weep? What cloud had come over his mind, and forced from him his tears?

It was the sacrifice required to prove his sincerity.

Tom felt his faithful companion, which he had bred, trained, and kept for years must be parted with. He had thought of selling his dog, then of giving it away, then of keeping it tied up at home; and he had more than once tried to do all three; but it was his friend, and they could not part.

CHAPTER III.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”

“**I**T must be done,” said Tom.

He turned aside to a wood, through which a river was running, and he took his handkerchief and tied in it a heavy stone, and fastened it to the dog's neck. The dog was true to his training, and did not cry out. Then, regardless of cold, Tom took his dog and the stone in his arms, walked into the middle of the stream, and there stood and said—

“Father, I drown my dog, because it is a temptation to me. Give it an easy death. I could not bear to see it in agony.”

Then he took the dog and the stone, and laid them at the bottom of the river; and the dog died.

Tom lifted the dead body, and, almost fainting, he reached the shore, fell on his dog's body, and wept like

a child. When his agony was almost over, he dug a grave with a stake which was laying on the ground, and having spread some leaves over the bottom, laid the dog in the grave, covered the body with leaves, and put back the earth. The grave was sodded all over, and on the tree which stood at the head of the grave, Tom placed a mark. The grave and the dog were left behind, and Tom continued his journey home all alone. Never, till his dying day, did he pass the place without going to look on the grave, whence he looked back on his life. There, laid buried the last link to savage life, and from that place, he re-commenced life as a man and as a Christian.

On one Sunday, a few weeks after the burial of the dog, Tom excused himself of going to his class at Manchester. Said he to the other members, "I am going to call at every house in the place to-day, and tell them that I have got a Methodist parson to preach to us at the pit three times next Sunday. So I wish you a happy day, and I am sorry to be unable to go with you."

Tom went from house to house, and told the people the Methodists were coming.

"The Methodists!" said the parson of the parish.

"The Methodists!" said the churchwardens.

"The Methodists!" said the beadle.

"The Methodists!" said the whole parish. And the arrival of Wombwell's Menagerie in any country town never created a greater sensation than did the appearance of these peculiar people.

For several Sabbaths the services were out of doors. Some persons sought to disturb the preachers, and they rudely assaulted them. Young squires threw eggs, and hired-roughs from other neighbourhoods came and mocked, but they got Methodized, and went back to their homes to Methodize others. As the Sunday came round week after week, so the Methodist preacher came with the Sunday; the good Manchester class-leader was also there, and both he and the preacher paid their own expenses; and at last every body got so happy, that they wondered they had not had the Methodists earlier. Not a penny had been expended beyond each individual's private disbursements, and they had an open-air society of five hundred hearers, and fifty members meeting in class, who paid each one penny weekly for the support of Mr. Wesley and his co-ministers. Then said the other four hundred and fifty hearers, "We ought to pay something too"; so Tom

carried round his hat, and made at the pit the first quarterly collection in that part of Lancashire. When Tom saw the moneys, and had carried them to the stewards (they had got all sorts of church officers), and had heard the goodly amount announced before all the people, he got on the great big coal whereon the lady used to sit, and which the colliers had bought from their master, never to be burned, but to be kept as as a memorial of the turning-point in their lives, and of the dear friend they had lost; I say that Tom stood on the great coal, and he called out:

“Friends, I have saved £5 since I was converted! My father has saved £5 too, and I am going to write Mr. Wesley, who is now at Bristol, and ask him if we had not better have a chapel. So Tom wrote his letter, paid tenpence for the postage, and told Mr. Wesley not to prepay his reply. But Mr. Wesley did pay the postage of his reply, and not only that, but enclosed £10. When Tom saw the money, and read the letter, he said, “This makes £20 towards a chapel.”

Tom took Mr. Wesley's letter round to the houses of the people, and they gladly gave as they could afford to the great cause. Before the week was out, Tom had got £200, and although Tom was absent from the pit

all the week, the men brought him his wages, and £5 besides from their master, who gave it towards the chapel.

"I want no wages—I've done no work at all this week," said Tom.

"The chaps in the pit have all done a bit extra for you, and they's earned th' wages ; so tak' it, lad," said a labourer. "And when we told master," said another pitman, "where ye be, and the brass you had got, he give us that £5 for the chapel." "And," says a third, "the parson himself, I think, will give us something. He says we are a queer lot, and he calls us 'Mr. Wesley's black diamonds.' But, though he likes us, he don't altogether like the new chapel coming."

They talked until it was time to go to their evening school, finishing the day, as usual, with a prayer-meeting and longing for the morrow. The Sabbath came: the sun was unclouded, and the congregation was large, and the preacher was useful and happy. At the close of the services, it was announced that a large barn would be fitted up as a Methodist chapel by the following Sunday, and the ground had been bought for a new chapel.

As soon as the spring came round, the building was

commenced; and where the first stone was laid, Tom dug a hole, and laid the lady's coal-seat in the earth.

About four years after the chapel was opened, Tom and his father, and several others, met at four o'clock in the morning, to hold a special prayer-meeting. Mr. Wesley was expected in a few days, to preach to them, and they had met together, to ask God to bless his visit. From the chapel they went to their labour, and before noon, Tom's father and seventeen others were drowned. The miners had disturbed the canal which ran over their pit's tunnels, and the water rushed into the pit, and gradually filled it. Tom and many others were near, and they hoisted men and boys out from the danger, but eighteen remained on a landing in the deep pit, and before they could be got out, the water rose to their feet; then it washed above their knees, and continued rising every moment.

"Tom!"

"Yes, father," replied Tom, for he heard his father's voice.

"We are all right. Give our love to Mr. Wesley. Good bye, Tom."

"Tom," sobbed others, "take care of our wives and children."

"Yes, lads, I will, as long as I live," replied a broken voice. "Good bye, father."

Then all was still. No more replies to names could be obtained. Only the loud wailings of orphans and widows could be heard.

A funeral sermon was again preached by Mr. Wesley, and this time in the neighbourhood of eighteen new graves. It was in the open air, for no building could contain the people. The parish was there, and masses of people from distant places. Several clergymen were there. The entire service was the united and solemn avowal of all denominations in the district—"Thy will be done."

Physical, moral, intellectual, and social misfortunes, when followed by humility and a right use of the knowledge obtained, are changed from curses to blessings. This Mr. Wesley urged his hearers to remember; and though every face was soiled by tears, every eye glistened with joy, and every right hand was put forth to help the widows and orphans. The clergyman of the parish kindly engaged to preside over the relief fund, and Tom was on the committee. The immense concourse of people scattered, carrying away with them good feelings, good intentions, and useful knowledge. For

many following Sabbaths every church and chapel in the district was crowded, and the ministers of religion anxiously sought to interest and to teach their new hearers of the gospel.

As soon as the solemn service was over, the chairman of the relief fund advanced to the preacher, and said, "Now Mr. Wesley, you must come home with me."

"I have a friend here," said Mr. Wesley, pointing to Tom.

"Tom's my friend too. Come along, Tom."

But Tom hesitated. However, Mr. Wesley advised him to accept the clergyman's kind offer, and so Tom spent the evening at the vicarage.

It was a memorable night for Tom. He was about to make another good move. His mother had been some years dead, and Tom was now living in a cottage, without a home-companion. He had never thought of matrimony—had never felt the exciting, enticing, commanding power of love. He had once admired and defended an orphan girl, and he was now about to see her again—he was about to know that he loved.

Tom was welcomed at the vicarage by the clergyman's lady. She conversed with him so affably, and

entered so heartily into his little schemes, that Tom lost all shyness, and felt as calm as an aristocrat, and quite as much at home. He mistrusted his position and felt strange when he looked about him, and saw the fine furniture, and the elegantly-attired ladies, and the other visitors, and his noble host; but the very considerate regard which all the company showed, gave him ease in his strange position. In the course of the evening, when the party were divided into groups for conversation, the parson's wife said, "Mr. Harrison, you have to live alone now. Why do you not marry?"

"I's began to think about it, ma'am."

"And have you fixed on a person likely to make you a good wife?"

"She's too good for me."

"And who is she?"

"I never spoke to her about it, ma'am, and I never know'd it till this afternoon, and then it came to me all at once, when I saw her at the preaching."

"But who is she?"

"It's she who waited upon us, when we had our supper."

"My waitress, Jane!"

"It's Jane, ma'am."

"I must speak with my husband. Poor Jane is an orphan. We are much pleased with her. She is a respectable girl, and we are interested in every thing that concerns her. Besides, she goes to church."

"Ma'am, Mr. Wesley won't let us ask anybody to go to chapel who goes to church. Jane can go to church, if she likes. I have plenty of things in the cottage to make her a comfortable home, and I get good wages. I have saved a little money, and have got the old man's purse too; but all that I shall give to the poor widows and orphans."

"Now, Mr. Harrison, I hope you will not speak to Jane on this subject until I have conversed with my husband.

"I promise you, ma'am. But you will not be long before you speak to him, for I want to have a word or two with Jane."

"This very night I will converse with him, and to-morrow he will see you."

"Thank you ma'am."

The company broke up, and Mr. Wesley journeyed by the mail coach to Manchester, and Tom returned to his lonely home. Next day Tom could not work; he fidgetted about the house, putting things straight,

and leaving everything he touched out of its usual place. Occasionally he opened the door and looked up the lane, as though he were expecting a bailiff; he sat down, and got up; and move about as he would, he could not feel easy.

A knock at Tom's door.

"Who's that?" said Tom to himself, as though he had not been expecting a visitor. Then he lifted the latch, and opened the door, and stood before the parson.

"So Tom, you want to make a Methodist of Jane."

"I do, sir."

"It won't do, sir."

"Sir!"

"If you will come to church every Sunday, you shall have Jane."

Tom's countenance grew very long, and he replied—
"Sir, I thank you, but were I to go to church, I should not deserve to have Jane. She would be ashamed of me, sir. We used to fight in this cottage on Sundays, and we got drunk, and swore, and were worse than poor. Then I got good from the Methodists, and I cannot leave them."

"But you can be just as good at church."

"No, sir, you give us no work to do there. If you

would call on us to pray now and then, and let us tell our experience to one another, we then might get good same as at chapel."

"How does that help you?"

"I tell's public that I am trying to save my soul, and when I've stood up and said so, it's a check on me when I get down the pit with the other men."

"Good."

"Sir, I want Jane."

"Tom, you may go and spend the evening with her; she is expecting you."

Away went the generous parson, and Tom tried to put on his best look for a visit to Jane. But he cut his face when shaving, and he made a dozen other mistakes, and when he was quite ready he lost his hat, and could not find it, and resolved to go in his old cap, and then found his hat on his head.

"Why, Tom, who would have thought of seeing you here to-night? Master and mistress are gone out. You'll have to call again."

"I don't call to see master or mistress, nor any of the pretty children."

"Then you have brought something."

"I's brought myself, Miss Jane, and I's come to

have a talk with you about a few little matters of interest."

"With me!"

"Yes. Parson knows all about it, and so does missis."

"All about what?"

"All about me, and what I want."

"And what do you want, Tom?"

"You, and for always."

"Tom."

"Jane, I am at home alone. You have no father and no mother, no more than me. So be my wife, Jane."

"Tom, I am a poor girl, and now the gentry folk take so much notice of you; and you are foreman of your pit, you ought to get a gentry wife."

"Jane, I feel that I am doing right. I am the man, and you's the woman; and so long as I can I will work for you, and make you happy."

"Tom, if you think me good enough, I will be your wife."

Tom was an earnest courter, and before his engagement was three months' old, he had Jane for his wife, and she made his cottage the prettiest place

in the neighbourhood. Everything within and without her home had the mark of order; and Tom and his wife were happy; and the parson, and his wife, and his children were always happy whenever they visited their favourite servant — a church-going Methodist.

Tom and Jane fitted up a bed-room for the Wesleyan ministers, and they made their cottage a free home for all the local preachers who came from distant places. This arrangement was changed by two causes: one of their ministers came to reside in the place, and some of the other Methodist families were moving in the same direction as Tom and Jane—keeping open houses for Methodist preachers.

CHAPTER IV.

“And learn the luxury of doing good.”

SOMETIMES pulpit disappointments sadly troubled Tom, for he was fond of useful preachers; and when a popular man was expected, and did not take his appointment, but sent a supply, the substitute was frequently an inferior person in address and ability. One Sunday morning a young man, plain in appearance and diminutive in person, brought the following note to Tom from the Superintendent of the Circuit.

“Brother Wilson cannot possibly take his appointments to-day, and the bearer will preach for him.”

“Come in lad, and sit down,” said the disappointed man, in a tone of voice which plainly told the poor preacher that he was an unwelcome guest. Then

going to his wife, he said, "Jane, you need not get the preacher's bed ready for that bit of a lad; let him sleep with the apprentices." The good wife hastened to the guest, and apologised for her husband's discourtesy. "He is so fond of Mr. Wilson that he cannot but feel disappointed. But never mind him. Do take some refreshment. After hearing a good sermon he will be happy as usual. You must be Mr. Wilson to-day. I am sorry I cannot go out this morning."

The young man took the pulpit. Tom liked his voice and his prayer, and he got so excited under the sermon that he could scarce contain his joy; and as soon as the sermon was over he slyly left the chapel, and, sneaking into his wife's presence, he said, "Missis, get the preacher's bed ready; he's a bigger man than I took him for."

"Tom, dear, I got the preacher's bed ready as soon as I knew it would be wanted. How could you think of putting a preacher with the apprentices, you naughty man."

"I am naughty, Jane."

"Yes, and very wicked too, sometimes; for only last Sabbath, when poor Mr. Jacobs preached from

'I AM hath sent me,' you irreverently said, I wish
'I AM' would send thee back again."

"Nobody heard me but you."

"I know that, but it's wrong to be so particular.
Why not be pleased with all the preachers that are
sent?"

"Why, some comes afore they's sent. If they were
sent, God would send a sermon with them. I only
get vexed when they come with only themselves."

Jane smiled and replied—

"Well, hasten and meet the gentleman, and bring
him home. You ought not to have left the chapel
without him. Go quickly, you will be in time."

Tom was in time, and the preacher read in his plain,
honest face "Welcome;" and that Sabbath was a
memorable day; and that diminutive man now lives
in history as a minister famous in his day for learning,
oratory, and patriotic labours.

Mr. Harrison's liberality—I henceforth drop Tom
and Jane, and I write of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison—
they have won honours, and are addressed throughout
their parish as respectable people; even the pit-men
have better manners than to speak of the chapel-
steward of the Cob-Coal Wesleyan Methodist Circuit

otherwise than as Mr. Harrison—I say Mr. Harrison's liberality was greater than his means, and though he kept himself free from debts, he was always poor. His excellent wife was a most thrifty person, and even while she humoured her husband's generous feelings, she contrived to add to their home comforts, and to save a little for expected additional expenses.

About two years after their happy marriage, when the first child was sleeping in the cradle, and Mrs. Harrison was busy with her needle, the husband was conversing with the Reverend Mr. Greatheart, a Wesleyan minister. The group were gathered about the fire. After a minute's silence, spent by the minister in watching the busy fingers of the good wife, the visitor said—

“Mrs. Harrison, could you conduct a shop?”

“I have often thought that I should like to have a shop; there is a good opening here for a general business, but we cannot avail ourselves of the opportunity, for we have no money.”

“Allow me to help you. I will provide everything you require on two conditions. You must learn from a person whom I will engage to teach you to manage the business; and at the end of twelve months you

shall decide whether you will have the business closed or continued. I have a friend who is a merchant, and I named you to him last night, and he will bear the risk. You will have only to sell, to pay wholesale prices, and to live on your gains."

"I will comply with your conditions most gladly, sir, and I will do my utmost to succeed."

"She will make a first-rate hand, I do believe," said the pleased husband.

"And where will the success end?" added the generous pastor.

The minister returned to Manchester, and completed his arrangements with the merchant; and a waggon load of goods following a cart containing fittings for the shop, weights, scales, and other necessities, was soon on the road to Mr. Harrison's home, where an assistant of great respectability had arrived to initiate Mrs. Harrison in the mysteries of her new calling.

The business was commenced, and the goods and the prices surprised the neighbourhood; buyers were pleased, and their regular patronage secured. Mrs. Harrison soon conquered the difficulties of her situation, and the teacher returned home, leaving the

lady an expert in her business, and well disciplined in "yes" and "no." The oiliest tongue in the parish could not get a "yes" in reply to a demand for credit; and the most pushing commercial traveller, after putting forth his best samples, with stupendous promises and most cunning prophecies of future events, could gain only a "no" when the thing was not wanted. The "no" and the "yes" followed each other through the transactions of every day, subject to no recalls, for thought acted before those monosyllables were put down to remain results. Through good management the adventure was a great success, and the waggon weekly travelled to and from Mrs. Harrison's shop.

"We will live," said the good wife to her husband, "just as we lived before we had the shop. Your wages shall pay all expenses, and then we shall have all our gains in our hands at the end of the year."

"You speak my thoughts exactly. We won't touch a copper."

Mrs. Harrison remembered the useful hints on good management that she had received; she carefully examined her bills for mistakes; she tested the weight of every package she received; she bought the

best goods, and sold at Manchester prices, saving her neighbours a long journey; and she most cleverly contrived to pay all accounts so as to obtain the usual discount on prompt payments. And when the year was over, the business had cleared the fittings of the shop and one hundred pounds besides. The good kind minister had helped them to take stock; he wielded the pen, and Mr. and Mrs. Harrison handled the scales and called out amounts. When the year's success was ascertained, they all shouted, and baby number two awoke in the cradle.

Then the mother soothed the child, and the servant announced supper; and they sat down to eat and to converse.

"That £100 belongs to you, Mr. Greatheart," said Mr. Harrison. "You take that, and as you have kindly offered us the business, we will keep it, and thank you all our days."

"I shall never forget your kindness, sir," said the wife.

"You must not talk so—you will spoil my supper. I never thought of taking a profit from the business. I will not touch a penny. I simply called a friend's attention to the opening here for a business, and he

sent the goods. You have pleased him by your success and prompt payments, and your gains are your own. The business is yours entirely. Your excellent management, Mrs. Harrison, has amazed me, though I expected a surprise."

"I owe my success, Mr. Greatheart, to your kind forethought in providing me with an efficient teacher, with supplies from an honourable merchant; and to my dear husband for helping me with his hands and his head; and to the kind blessing of God. Even my dear old master said yesterday, when he called for his snuff, 'Jane, this looks like Providence—thank God for it.' But, sir, I shall be unhappy, and so will my husband, if you do not share with us our gains."

"I insist on it," said the husband.

"I will not receive a penny. I have a duty to perform as a minister, and I can accept of no fees. I have not only to do my duty as a preacher, but to promote as far as I can the temporal prosperity of my flock, for our society's general benefit. It is your duty to obtain riches as far as you can honestly. It is as much your duty to gain money as to get religion—the latter always first, and then the riches. Money is one of the great powers of the world; and, when it

is allied with religion, it gives prosperity to its owner, and happiness to all in connexion with him."

"And are *you* not to struggle after riches too?" said Mrs. Harrison.

"No. When I accepted the office of minister, I renounced trade. The united societies of Methodism guarantee to me a provision for life, and I am contented. It would degrade me, were I to accept your kind offer. Besides, I have a reason for wishing you to prosper in life, beyond that of wishing you and your family success. The prosperity of a Methodist is a good thing for Methodism."

"Say no more, Jane, on the subject now. I have got an idea," said Mr. Harrison. "Good ones are very scarce, but this one has come to me without studying its ——" (he whispers the idea to his wife).

"That is wrong," exclaimed the parson, laughing. "Whispering in company—shame! shame!"

"It's a capital idea," said the wife. "We have formed a conspiracy—my husband, myself, my little girl here, and my big boy upstairs."

"Now, naughty conspirators, let us leave the table and renew our conversation."

They soon got seated about the fire, as when the

shop was started; and, after the servant had removed the tray, and the minister and Mr. Harrison had lighted their pipes, conversation was resumed.

"You have gained one hundred pounds, and you have it in hand. Now it must not be idle," began the preacher. "You have first to decide how that money can be expended to the best advantage. My thoughts are, that buying with ready money, you will buy even cheaper than when taking the usual credit."

"If we buy with ready money," said Mrs. Harrison, "my discounts will keep the family."

"Just so, and if your husband were to take journeys, extending your transactions to distant places, with the same amount of anxiety as now, you could do a much greater trade. As the business increases get assistance; and let the limit of your capital be the limit of your trade. Keeping your moneys moving, paying prompt, and selling cheap for ready money, will create an active trade of large returns, small profits, and great results."

"We must have a horse and cart," said Mr. Harrison.

"There are many things that we do not keep that I am asked for," said the wife.

"Then that point is settled," said the visitor; "the business is to advance! Now, the next subject is giving and saving."

"I am a good giver," said the husband; "I thoroughly understand that."

"Pardon me, you are not a good giver. You give without having a system. A good giver says, 'I will give a portion of my income to religion,' and he keeps by his principle. Now what portion of your gains do you think you ought to give away?"

"Half of it," said Mr. Harrison.

"He empties his pockets sometimes," said the prudent wife, "and gives up smoking for a little time to save a shilling, though he knows the pipe does him good."

"That's a bad system, and Mr. Harrison is a bad giver. Give a tenth part of your income to the Lord, and no more is required of you. Extraordinary calls on your charity may come in time of famine and pestilence; and then improve your offering through self-denial, not by reducing your estate."

"But we may get proud of our riches."

"Not if you accumulate wealth honestly, and for honest purposes. We ministers want our members to

be the best business people in the world; we want all to save money, so as to improve the position of their children, and our future societies. Why should we not have a Methodist class-leader the Prime Minister of England some day? We cannot get great people to come down to our humble Methodism, so our descendants must go to them, taking our principles with them. It may be two or three centuries before they conquer the position, but if the coming generations of Wesleyans progress continuously and wisely in the acquisition of power, with religion they may conquer whatever they resolve to conquer."

After some further conversation, the minister said—

"Please give me a candle, Mrs. Harrison; I must retire."

Then came a knock. Mr. Harrison himself replied, and as soon as he had opened the door, he saw a little boy, ten years of age, in a common smock-frock, such as were worn in those days to make children in poor clothes look clean and respectable.

"Please, sir, I want work."

"You do not belong to this part of the country."

"No, sir, I am from Northamptonshire."

"What made you come here?"

"My mother last Sunday night had no supper, and my father had no supper, and what mother gave to my brother and me was so little that my little brother cried for more. So when they were all asleep, I got down from my bed-room window, and soon afterwards I came away."

"Well, what next, my brave boy?"

"I have had several little jobs of work—minding gentlemen's horses, and doing other things as I have come along, but I want a regular place."

"Come in, poor boy," said Mrs. Harrison, as she pushed past her admiring husband.

Little Joseph tottered into the house, for he was footsore, and lame, and weary. Poor lad! he had had no bed for a week. Whilst he was eating a good supper, the minister, who had put away his candle, drew from him the whole of his history. His father's ancestors had been rich, but Joseph's father was very poor; the child had seen only sorrow and want, and that contentment which is so inseparable from good people. He had left home from no other cause than to give the food he consumed to his mother and others. He had not run away, but had coolly got down from his bed-room window, and had prayed a

little prayer on the door-step of his father's cottage ; and then he shed a few tears, and quietly opened the garden gate, and took a last look at home, and hurried forward, not knowing where he was going. Sunrise found him, weary and breakfastless, ten miles from home. Just as he got very hungry, he saw a drover of cattle before him, and he hurried forward to the drover, and was engaged as an assistant. He got both bread and coppers, saying his prayers before he laid his head down on a stone to sleep. When he got too cold for rest, he got up and ran for heat. So passed the week, till Saturday night came round, and then he stood at Mr. Harrison's door, with no prospect but another stone pillow, another hedge-side bed, and another cold night.

CHAPTER V.

“Whoe’er amidst the sons of reason, valour, liberty, and virtue, displays distinguished merit, is a noble of nature’s own creating.”

“I WILL have him in the shop,” said Mrs. Harrison.

“I will give him clothes,” said the minister.

“No, his clothes shall be bought out of our first hundred pounds,” said Mr. Harrison, “there is ten pounds, you know, to be spent, and the kind God has sent us a customer.”

“It shall be so,” said the wife; “it looks as though he had been guided to us.”

“I came all the way direct as I could,” said the little fellow, not understanding the conversation.

“I never turned after leaving father’s, only when the road turned. My mother told me a long time ago that when we tried to do right, we were sure to do

right, and I kept trying all the way, and I felt sure I should be right some time."

The little wanderer was washed, and his little feet's sores were dressed, and he was taken to a comfortable bed, and he was told that it would be his bed for many years if he was a good boy; and a letter was posted at midnight to tell his friends where he was; and then the happy friends parted for the night.

Mr. Harrison took business journeys. His plan was a good one, and he succeeded whenever he sought a customer. "I am come to do you good. You sell that article too dear. I will supply you so as to give you a good profit when you sell at a less price." Such was his plain method of introducing his samples to a new customer; and because he never misrepresented an article, and never sent goods inferior to his promise, and never pushed his goods on buyers, he got business, and the confidence of his customers, and great gains. His resolution to abide by honest transactions, small profits, and quick returns, gave him power over his customers, and even their consumers. The poor cottager, who had never thought of doing otherwise than live a week in advance of his income, making all his wages on the Saturday due to his tradesman, was made

to pull up, and to change his method of living, or else to buy his goods at credit shops, where supplies at dearer rates were inferior in quality. His fixed system of making every purchase or sale beneficial to himself and to all dependent on him for supplies, extended his business throughout the district. He became famous for "push, tact, and principle," and he gave an upward movement to all his connexions.

* * * * *

Years have passed away.

I pass over Mr. Harrison's journey to London at Mr. Wesley's death. I cannot stay to name any particulars of the Circuit's advance in numbers and influence. I take up the history when footsore Joseph is thirty years of age, and a Wesleyan minister; when the Harrisons are worth ten thousand pounds; when three ministers and thirty-seven local preachers are employed in the Cob-Coal Circuit; and when the whisper of the happy conspirators against the resolution of the generous Mr. Greatheart is about to be revealed.

But I must first dismiss Joseph. One Sunday, twelve years ago, the usual lecturer to the Sunday-school children did not take up his engagement, and

Joseph, an intelligent young man, was asked by the superintendent to deliver an address. Joseph, with humility stamped on his face and manners, was pushed forward into the lecturer's seat, and the door of the pulpit was closed ; and without book or paper, besides the Bible and hymn-book, he was expected to speak. Just as a brave man acts when he gets positioned so as to be obliged to make a dash or endure defeat—Joseph collected himself, and announced his subject—

“Have faith in God.”

Then he advanced cautiously to his task, and applied his teachings by examples of castaways on the earth who have believed, and been cherished after the world had reckoned them as losses. He told his own little history—how he had been taught by his mother (an Independent) to pray and to trust, when a very little boy ; how he had grown up with a fixed faith that the Almighty always heard prayer and always answered—though sometimes the reply was long in coming ; how that he had believed that whenever a person was sincerely endeavouring to do right, whether he moved to the right or left, in starting his journey of life-labour, he would prosper. Just as he commenced his discourse, persons of influence came to the school, and

were surprised by his eloquence and knowledge. The young speaker was encouraged, and advanced through years of preparation to the position of a Wesleyan minister. He lived forty years in England, in the full work of the ministry, and then he went down to the grave amidst the lamentations of a numerous family, and a vast concourse of mourners.

Now about the whisper.

"I knew it would be so. I mean, I believed it would be so," said Mr. Harrison to his old friend, Mr. Greatheart, who was on a visit to the family, to assist at the marriages of his only daughter to Mr. Harrison's eldest son, and his only son to Mr. Harrison's eldest daughter; two marriages of four interesting young persons starting life with affluence, the best of principles, and the wise determination to copy the examples of their honoured parents.

"Yes," said Mrs. Harrison, "you remember my husband whispering to me the night of our first stock-taking."

"I do," replied Mr. Greatheart, "but I had forgotten the circumstance. And what did he then say?"

"He whispered 'Our children shall marry his

children.' You know we had a son and daughter, and it was that circumstance which was remembered by my husband, and which he called a 'good idea.' "

"A thought I have cherished too," said Mr. Harrison.

"It is an arrangement which I have not made," said the visitor, "but in which I greatly rejoice. My two dear motherless children have caused me anxious hours, for I have wanted to keep their respectable positions, and it is hard for young people to maintain their stations, and to move ahead without a little money to begin with. I have carefully educated them, and that was all I could do for them; now this unexpected happiness comes to cheer me, and to brighten the last days of my long life."

"We are all getting old. My Jane with her spectacles, and you with your bald head, and my white hairs, all tell of long winters since we sat in the old house yonder, weighing our goods, and ascertaining to a penny our success."

"But how did our young people become acquainted?"

"We have always talked to our family on all business engagements; indeed, we have acquainted

them with every particular of our commencement in trade, excepting only the whisper, and that we reveal to them at breakfast to-morrow. Tom we sent to Darlington, when we knew your Mary was at home, and he loved her. Then we got your daughter here, and insisted on her brother coming to fetch her away, and he fell in love with Jane."

"And after the young folks loved each other," said Mr. Harrison, "then the old lady and myself concluded the plot, and the children have completed the engagements."

"And your fine old clergyman, Mrs. Harrison, will marry them! He must be nearly ninety years of age."

"He is ninety-two; and he is so interested in these marriages. He has been through Tom's mill. 'Who could have thought it,' said he; 'I now know that religion, ambition, and industry, united and perpetuated from generation to generation in Great Britain, can make a peasant's son the ancestor of a peer.'"

"He is quite right," said Mr. Greatheart. "Let any poor man resolve to conquer a position in the world, and he can do it; he may die on the road, but

his children's faces are turned towards the point of conquest, and they continue the journey. Look at the ups and downs of life. The changes, even in the highest circles, prove that the advance of enterprising families is irresistible; the proudest peers bow to what they call fate, and wed their families to the great stranger whose advance upwards was made from poverty and a cottage."

"But some people get on in life without religion," added Mrs. Harrison.

"They seem to prosper. Sometimes their families maintain the position for generations; then follows ruin. Without religion there can be no abiding prosperity. But we must always bear in mind, that many persons live fearing God, and practising all the principles of our holy faith, without making any public confession beyond the common attendance at divine worship. Some good people would feel uncomfortable, were they not to speak out their religion, and others, equally good, silently worship God."

"I have found it always safe," said Mr. Harrison, "to judge a man by his actions. I never pay any attention to reports. Generally they are calumnies; an enemy speaks an evil word, and it travels from

mouth to mouth till it becomes a sentence ; then it grows into an accusation, and the unwary assist the vicious to push it through society to the victim's ruin. A man of bad principles will always tell enough of himself to his neighbours for their caution ; he wants no calumnies for his neighbour's protection ; his deeds are his safest references."

"And," said the minister, "how many mistakes in life are put down as crimes. How many unfortunates are the victims of circumstances ; they have been educated in error, and blamed for disappointments. Put a child on the Brighton coach, and he will go south, and if you put him in the Edinburgh mail, he will go north ; and so it is with nine out of every ten who become unfortunate in life—it is their education, or a false position, which brings on their ruin. But it is past twelve—this is not our first midnight meeting. Good night."

* * * * *

Now I must hasten on. I pass over another long period. I cannot now name a hundred untold incidents in the life of Mr. Harrison. I renew my sketch when the good man is broken by sickness, when talebearers are hurrying to and fro from house to

house, saying — “The doctors say he cannot get better.” Young people are asking at their homes “Is it true, father—was dear old Mr. Harrison once a common pitman?” “Did he,” says a little girl, “go down into the black pit for coals; why it would make his nice white hair all black?” “It is all true, child,” answer many parents.

A few Sundays before the sickness closed, there was a special meeting in the Cob-Coal Wesleyan Chapel; it comprised nearly all the members of the Wesleyan societies in the town and the adjacent villages. It was a love-feast.

“Poor old Mr. Harrison will think of us,” said a Methodist to his friend.

“Yes, that he will. I cannot remember a love-feast without him.”

“He has had no illness since childhood till now. He was present at the first love-feast held in this chapel, and has never been absent from divine service on a Sabbath since the place was erected, till last month, when his sickness commenced. I fear he will leave us.”

“We cannot expect him to live long, if he is restored to health; but he is so mixed up with all

our church's engagements, that I do not see how we can do without him."

"I remember a conversation he had with the late Mr. Jones, who was the superintendent of the Sunday Schools. I was fifteen years of age. Our teacher of the boy's first Bible-class had reported us to the superintendent as too advanced for the class; he had finished our education and advised our dismissal with honours. The good Mr. Jones gave us each a Bible and hymn-book, and words of advice, and led us to the school-door, and there patting us on the head, he said — 'Good bye; be good boys.' Mr. Harrison came up just as we were starting off, and he wanted to know something about our movements homewards at that unusual hour. The superintendent read him our characters, and explained our dismissal. 'This is an error,' said Mr. Harrison. 'I have an appointment to die. You have to die, Mr. Jones. We shall want successors. These lads must not leave us. Send them to my house, and all others, both boys and girls, too old for classes.'"

"Did he put you to work?"

"For several weeks he taught us at his residence. He gave us lessons on 'The evidences of Christianity,'

'The history, doctrines, and policy of the Wesleyans,' 'The inability of any Christian to do his duty without being associated with the church,' 'The way to succeed in life,' and many other subjects. The result was that not one of us—and we were twenty in number—left the school; senior classes were formed. John May was the boy who was being dismissed with me."

"John May! The young minister who died in Africa! Did you know him?"

"Yes; he was my most intimate companion when a boy; but he was more studious than myself, and had better abilities."

"Was there not something remarkable about his birth?"

"The minister has gone into the chapel. Call and see me some evening, and I will tell you all about poor John May."

The meeting commenced. During the service, a tall pale man, with long white hair, passed down the aisle. It was Mr. Harrison: he had left his room and the house, unobserved by his family, who thought him sleeping, and had shut themselves up in a distant room, where they could converse without disturbing him. The minister hastened towards him, and

assisted him to a seat within the space set apart for the communion service. There, sitting in the minister's chair, and leaning forwards, resting on a stick, he looked earnestly and solemnly at the audience, and feebly, yet distinctly whispered—

“Farewell.”

The audience felt the softly-spoken word, as though it were a fire thrown among them. They were startled, they turned pale, and then they wept. This roused the dying man, and he got on his feet, and stood erect, and with his right hand extended towards heaven, he exclaimed—

CHAPTER VI.

“But I have liv’d, and have not liv’d in vain.
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain,
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and time, and breathe when I expire.”

“THEY are all dead but me. I am the survivor of the first love-feast in this place, and this is my last attendance. I am dying. The elders of this society will soon follow me to the grave, and all our offices in the church will descend to you young members. Prepare yourselves for our work. Live in a converted state. Be blameless in the world. Lose no opportunity of personal and family improvement. Be true to Methodism, and she will repay you. All my success in life, and happiness in death, is through this blessed religion I learnt from Methodists. I now leave you. I cannot shake hands with you all. I

shake hands with our minister, and through him with you, and your families, and with the Circuit. Farewell, sir, farewell."

He was carried home; his exertions in speaking brought on faintness; but he rallied, and that evening conversed with his wife and children till a late hour.

Mr. Harrison died on a Sunday morning. He was too weak for conversation, and he requested his children to retire to a distant room, and there to sing softly his favourite hymn; when so employed the venerable mother beckoned them back to the father's chamber, for the last minute of his life had arrived. The dying man tried to sit up: he was assisted and supported by two sons. All his family were present, standing in an awful silence with pent feelings. At last he feebly said, "Remember—live so as to die in the Lord." After a moment's pause, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Then, when attempting to speak again, with a gentle sigh, his spirit passed away, and returned to God.

A few days passed over, and then the bell-man went throughout the town; and he stood in every street and rang his bell; and people rushed to the doors of their houses, and some threw open their

windows, and some pressed round the officer; and when the sound of the bell had died away, the bell-man shouted—

“Please to take notice.

“The mayor, the corporation, the clergy, and the gentry of this parish have arranged to attend the burial of our great townsman, the late Thomas Harrison, Esq., to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock; and it is requested that all the shops will be closed; and that all respectable people will attend the funeral.

“God save the King.”

And the next day the coal-pits were empty; the pitmen were washed, and in their Sunday clothes; and masses of sad-faced people filled the street; and the funeral advanced through a throng of neighbours two miles long, whilst the great bells of the churches tolled; and the deceased was laid in a vault near the grave of the lady who taught him to read; and then the weepers returned to their homes, the sun went down, and early the next morning the world of labour moved again.

Reader, to further illustrate my narrative I should give you the home-character of Mr. Harrison, and take you to some of the family tea-parties which

followed his interment. Friends from distant places are visiting friends, and families divided on labour days are together on this extraordinary rest day.

"How got he his learning?"

"Why, he worked for it. He never went to any school a day in his life. After learning to read, he learnt cyphering and other things at the evening school, which the Manchester class-leader started."

"He always rose early for reading."

"I remember many times going past his study's window on dark winter mornings as I was going to work, and I always saw a light burning there. He was up and at work at five o'clock."

* * * * *

"I promised to tell you about John May."

"I wish you would. I have heard so much about him."

"It was the first week in May ——."

"Now you are wrong, James : you are always bad at remembering dates. It was the very week Dick was born. I remember nurse coming to my bed to tell me, and Dick was born on the tenth of May."

"I am wrong a few days then. It was in May, when Mr. and Mrs. Harrison were at supper, that a

loud knock at the street-door made the waitress start. She hurried to reply, and there was nothing at the door but a basket. The girl looked up and down the street, but could see no one; then she carried the basket to her master and mistress, and they removed a cloth which covered it, and saw a little boy sleeping and smiling. He was nicely dressed, and was laid on a parcel of clothes—his wardrobe and his bed. But there was no paper to give his name or any other information."

"The post brought a paid letter the next morning, and I have a copy of it somewhere."

"It's in that old black tea-pot on the top shelf of the cupboard behind you."

"Here it is. I got it when Mr. Harrison gave a copy of his letter to the leaders' meeting."

"Did he give the letter to them?"

"No, he had sympathy with the poor mother, and would not do anything to her annoyance. Only the Rev. Mr. Greatheart and our late old clergyman saw the letter."

"What was done with the original letter?"

"It was buried with John May. Previous to his death, he had it sewn up in a black silk bag, and he

died with his secret attached to his neck; and his written request that it should not be disturbed was strictly observed."

"Now read; I am anxious to hear."

"Listen."

"Dear Mr. Harrison,

"With a bleeding heart I forsake my child. His existence as my son would ruin a respectable family. Bring him up in poverty that he may never know the sorrows of gentility without riches. He is sent to you as a little human being without a friend. Pity and be merciful to my boy.

"HIS MOTHER."

"I was told that the original letter was soaked in tears."

"Tell me all."

"Mr. Harrison wanted to have the little fellow in the family, but Mr. Greatheart and the clergyman advised him to hand the child over to the parish. He was carefully brought up by poor Wesleyans; and his rich friends, the Harrisons, helped him privately, keeping a strict watch over him, but giving him no

promise of future aid. He got to our Sunday School, and worked his way from the A. B. C. class to the Bible class; and he became a preacher, and the local preachers and leaders thought him likely to be useful as a minister, and he was sent to a district meeting of ministers at Manchester to be examined."

"Yes."

"He passed his examination most honourably, and he was asked what work he offered himself for."

"I do not understand you."

"Well, when a candidate for the Wesleyan ministry is approved by the district meeting, their recommendation goes to the conference with particulars of the work he offers himself for. Some candidates offer themselves for the ministry at home, others for missionary circuits, and many others say, 'wherever the conference appoints.'"

"Now I understand."

"John May replied, 'For Sierra Leone.' The chairman and the ministers looked in surprise at the young speaker. 'Sierra Leone, the graveyard of missionaries!' said the chairman."

"'Yes, sir,' replied Mr. May. 'Missionaries must go there, and no one is more prepared to go there

than I am. I am healthy. I am likely to live usefully there, and I have no family to be afflicted if my life falls. If you send any other man—should he fall, you lose a life, and a family is broken. With me you will lose only a life. But, sir, ever since I learnt my history, I have been a praying Christian; I have learnt from this letter (his mother's letter which he held up in his right hand) to make sacrifices for the benefit of others. I might live longer in England than in Africa, but not more usefully; and I feel called of God to offer myself to you and the conference as a missionary for Sierra Leone.' He was sent. He lived only a few years, but was a most successful missionary. He died there and was buried."

"He never learnt who his parents were?"

"No. When he preached his farewell sermon in Cob-Coal Chapel, a lady with three gentry people, all strangers to the place, sat in the large pew, near the chapel door (where Widow Jones now sits), and she was affected from the moment she saw Mr. May; and at last was so excited, that she was carried out by her friends; and a carriage in waiting took her quickly away."

"Poor John May!"

"Poor! he was the happiest lad in the parish. He never took to our games, but he was always cheerful, and everybody liked him. He had the run of Mr. Harrison's library, and at last he went on his journey to Africa as cheerfully as a girl goes to gather flowers."

"Who gave him his name?"

"He was called May, because he arrived at Mr. Harrison's in May, and he was called John after Mr. Wesley."

* * * * *

Mrs. Harrison survived her husband only six months; then the tomb was re-opened, and she was buried. The Reverend Mr. Greatheart died at the residence of his son-in-law; and the family vault was again opened, and he was laid with his friends, to wait with them for the morning of the resurrection.

Mr. Harrison's offices in the church were quickly filled up; for every station, a proper person was waiting thoroughly qualified for all the duties; and the Cob-Coal Wesleyan Chapel has had a congregation and a Wesleyan minister every Sunday since Mr. Harrison's death down to the present time; and two new Wesleyan chapels have been built in the parish.

“And what became of the family?”

Ask that old mariner yonder — “Where are the gallant vessels that so proudly put out to sea a few days ago?” He replies—

“They must be a good step on their voyages. They were in fine trim; had good captains and first-rate pilots, with the best of compasses and charts; they have had everything in their favour, and must be, please God, hundreds of miles away.”

So with the Harrisons. They buried their parents; they divided the property; they arranged a system of family intercourse, with an annual family meeting, and then they parted for individual exertions after greater prosperity, and a nobler family name, walking in the steps of their parents.

“Where are they?”

Scattered throughout the world; commingling with all communities; imbuing other minds with the earnest, religious principles of the Wesleys; advancing in their pursuits; preparing their associations for the extinction of caste, sects, and dogmas; honouring God, and enjoying a full payment of the promise—
“Them that honour me, I will honour.”

